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THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

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THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

A COMEDY DOMESTIC UPHEAVAL

In One Act

By

HARRY L. NEWTON

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THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE.

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CHARACTERS.

JOSH SLINGER—A Convivial Young Husband.
BROADWAY WALKER—A Chance Acquaintance.
MRS. SLINGER—A Trusting Young Wife.
JAMES—A Butler.
TIME—The Cold Gray Dawn.
PLACE—Drawing Room of the Slinger Residence.
Time of playing—Twenty Minutes.

COSTUMES.

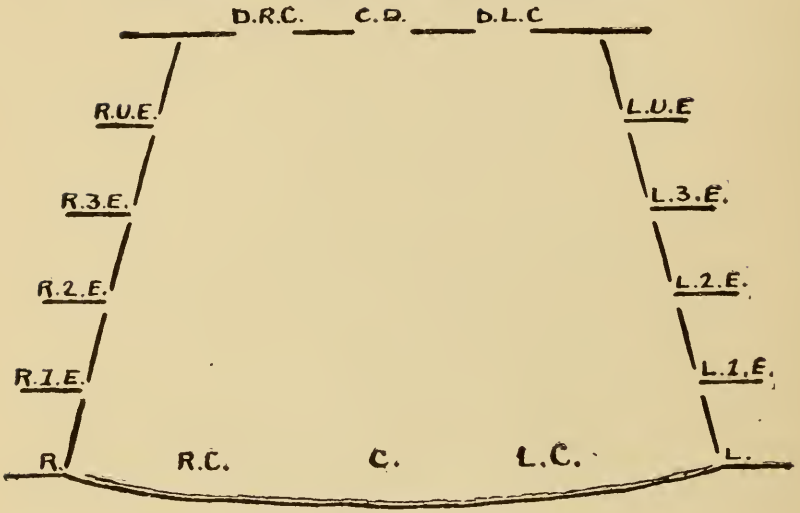
JOSH SLINGER—Business suit.

BROADWAY WALKER—About 40 years of age. White powdered hair and smoothly shaven face. Wears frock coat and light trousers.

MRS. SLINGER—Young, pretty and emotional. Wears a pretty morning gown.

JAMES—A typical English butler, using Cockney dialect.

DIAGRAM OF STAGE.



AUDIENCE.

L. 1 E.—Left first entrance.
R. 1 E.—Right first entrance.
L. U. E.—Left upper entrance.
C.—Centre of stage.
R. C.—Right centre of stage.
L. C.—Left centre of stage.
C. D.—Centre door.
D. R. C.—Door right centre.
D. L. C.—Door left centre.

THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

A Comedy Domestic Upheaval in 1 Act.

By Harry L. Newton.

DESCRIPTION OF STAGE SETTING.

Drawing room, boxed in "three," with doors, Center, Right and Left. There are heavy curtains hanging on center door. The entire setting to be as elaborate as circumstances will permit. A large couch (or davenport) is an essential part of setting, also about a dozen sofa pillows. At back, R of C, is a cabaret table containing filled decanter, glasses and bottle of charged water. At R, opposite door, is a large library table. Other furniture ad lib.

[Scene—A drawing room. See description of stage setting. Lights are dim at rise, as it is sup-

posed to be early morning. Discovered, Slinger and Walker. The former is stretched on library table, asleep, the latter is asleep on couch, with head hanging almost to floor and both feet elevated as high as possible. The apartment presents a disordered appearance, with articles of clothing scattered about. One hat and a shoe are hanging on a chandelier, another shoe is on the cabaret table, while a vest and a collar adorn a piece of statuary. Several seconds elapse after rise of curtain before action, then Walker snores loudly. Slinger stirs uneasily at sound, then turns over on table in an effort to gain a more comfortable position. Walker again snores, making a sound at finish like the honk-honk of an auto horn.]

SLINGER (*Drowsily*)—Don't toot your horn at me. I've got as much right to this street as you have.

[A few seconds again elapse, WALKER snores and finishes with a loud, long-drawn out whistle. SLINGER slowly raises head and gazes sleepily about him, yawns, sits up, stretches and yawns again. Suddenly he discovers WALKER, rubs eyes and stares in amazement at him. He slowly gets up, drags himself off table, showing effects of a night's dissipation, and with eyes on WALKER, backs to cabaret table, seizes decanter, pours out and takes a drink or two, still eyeing WALKER. He stares at him for an instant then pushes button on wall for butler, goes to Center Door and pulls curtains

apart. Lights full on. He again eyes WALKER, walks close to him and gazes curiously down at him.]

SLINGER—Well, for the love of cauliflower! I wonder where THAT came from, WHAT it is and how IT got here! (*Scratches head in puzzled manner.*)

[Enter JAMES, C. D.]

JAMES—Did you ring, sir?

SLINGER (*Whirling about, facing* JAMES)—Did I? Oh, yes; of course I ringed—I mean, rung. James, come here. (JAMES *goes to him.*) James if I ask you something, will you give me a careful answer?

JAMES—Hi'll try, sir.

SLINGER—That's fair enough. James, do you see something on that couch there? (*Points at* WALKER.)

JAMES (*Looks first at* SLINGER *and then at* WALKER; *puzzled*)—Yes, sir; thank you, sir.

SLINGER—Don't thank me. It don't belong to me.

JAMES—Yes, sir; thank you, sir!

SLINGER—James, what's it look like to you?

JAMES—A man, sir; asleep, sir.

SLINGER (*With a sigh of relief*)—Thanks, James. I'm glad you see the same as I *thought* I saw. Friend of yours?

JAMES (*Astonished*)—No, sir. If you hask me sir, I should say has 'ow 'e was a friend of yours, sir; thank you, sir.

SLINGER (*Astounded*)—What! Friend of mine? I never saw him before in all my life.

JAMES (*Meekly*)—Thank you, sir.

SLINGER (*Peevishly*)—Stop it; don't thank me every breath you take. (*Looks at* WALKER)—Strange! I can't account for him at all.

JAMES (*Apologetically*)—If you hask me, sir, I fawncy 'e's the gentleman—ahem! that 'elped me carry you inside the 'ouse, lawst night, sir.

SLINGER— (*Staggered*)—He—he helped you carry me—he helped you—(*Stops, at a loss for words.*)

JAMES—'E did, sir; thank you, sir.

SLINGER—(*Severely*)—James, what was the matter with me that I had to be carried into the house?

JAMES (*Nervously*)—Hif you hask me, sir, you were somewhat the worse for liquor, sir.

SLINGER—(*Puts a hand to his head, walks unsteadily to cabaret table, pours a drink and gulps it down.*) James, that is a direct insult to my well known capacity. I must have been poisoned—not drunk. (*Sets glass down, looks nervously about; cautious tone.*) James, does my wife—did my wife see me come in?

JAMES—No sir; thank you, sir.

SLINGER—(*Sighs in relief.*) Well, that's one "thank you" I'm thankful for. (*Sits on edge of chair.*) What time was it, James, when I—when I was carried in last night?

JAMES—Two o'clock, sir.

SLINGER—(*Reflectively*)—Um! Was my—did Mrs. Slinger appear to be at all worried, James?

JAMES—(*Cheerfully*)—Ho no, sir. You phoned her, sir.

SLINGER—(*Nearly falling off chair—astounded*)—I did WHAT?

JAMES—You phoned her, sir, has to what was a detainin' of you, sir.

SLINGER—(*Stares in dismay at* JAMES *an instant*)—And what did I say was detaining me?

JAMES—Hi don't know, sir.

SLINGER—(*Groans dismally*)—Oh, Lord! I'm a bright young man, I am. (*Buries face in both hands; groans again.*)

JAMES—(*Sympathetically*)—What's the matter, sir?

SLINGER—(*Lifts head and glares at* JAMES)—Matter? Say, "Mutt" is my middle name. I don't know what excuse I made to my wife over the phone. I remember I had three or four dandy excuses, but I don't remember which one I used. (*Groans*)—And now I'm sure to hand the wrong one to her.

JAMES—Yes, sir; thank you, sir!

SLINGER—(*Angrily jumps to feet, grabs a book off table and hurls it at* JAMES)—Get out, you half portion of a man! Go!

JAMES—(*Dodging book*)—Yes, sir; thank you, sir. (*Exit, haughty manner, C. D.*)

SLINGER—(*Sinking abjectedly on chair and staring curiously at* WALKER. *Moodily*)—The only way I see is to kill that man. "Dead men tell no tales." If that fellow speaks, I can see my trunk on an express wagon, headed for some cozy bachelor apartment. (*Springs to his feet, crosses to* WALKER; *dramatically*)—Now then, to know the worst! (*Slaps* WALKER *violently on shoulder in an attempt to awaken him.* WALKER *merely grunts and tries to turn over*)—Here you, wake up! (*Shakes his vigorously*).

WALKER—(*Rising slowly to a sitting posture; stupidly*)—Eh? What's the idea? (*Stares stupidly about*).

SLINGER—That's exactly what I'd like to know. And please don't be long in the telling of it, either. (*Sits on edge of a chair, gazing sternly at* WALKER.)

WALKER—(*Sitting on edge of couch, elbows on knees and chin in hands*)—My boy, you look some peeved. (*Grins broadly.*)

SLINGER—(*Fretfully*)—Don't call me "my boy." Who are you, and never mind how I look.

WALKER—(*Good naturedly*)—Say, why this sudden change? Last night you were embracing me like a love-sick Romeo, and calling me the best friend you ever had. And now—Say, old top; I could talk better if I had a drop of red liquor.

SLINGER—(*Indicating cabaret table*)—Go to it. It's always customary to allow the condemned whatever they ask for before they are executed.

WALKER—(*Jumps to feet—shocked*)—Hey? Condemned? Executed? I don't get you.

SLINGER—It merely means that I am going to kill you. Maybe you have an alibi, but I doubt it. (*Surveys* WALKER *suspiciously*)—You're a guilty looking wretch, all right.

WALKER—(*At cabaret table, pours drink, gulps it down, turns and grins at* SLINGER)—What's the charge, judge?

SLINGER—You enticed me from my seat on the water wagon, and kept me away from a fond and loving wife the larger part of last night.

WALKER—(*Stares at* SLINGER *in amazement then bursts into a loud and prolonged laugh; finally controls himself.*) Say, that's good. Great! *I* enticed you! *I* kept you from a fond and loving wife! *I* did! (*Laughs loudly again.*)

SLINGER—(*Nervously*)—Shut up! My wife'll hear you!

WALKER—(*Gulps down another drink, crosses to couch and sits*)—My boy, let me tell you something. When I hooked up with you last night, the water wagon you speak of was some miles up the road from you.

SLINGER—(*Surprised*)—Hey? How do you know?

WALKER—Say, when a chap has both arms around a lamp post, is looking up at the light and yelling: "Come on down and let me in; I know you're home; there's a light in the window."

(*Laughs*)—That's good evidence.

SLINGER—(*Awed*)—Gosh! Was I that bad?

WALKER—You were—only more so.

SLINGER—And then you came along?

WALKER—I did. We were alone together, you and I. Alone together like a couple of ship wrecked sailors, with water, water everywhere but not a drop of liquor to drink. You told me your name and I told you mine, or as much of it as I could remember, and you swore we'd be comrades. Don't you remember?

SLINGER—(*With hands to head; wearily*)—I don't remember. I can't think. (*Suddenly*)—Didn't I say anything about my wife? Her waiting at home for me?

WALKER—(*Shakes head*)—Not a blessed thing, old top. In fact, you told me that you didn't have a friend in the world except me—not even a wife.

SLINGER (*Dismally*)—Oh, but I must have been awful!

WALKER—Then you have a wife?

SLINGER (*Peevishly*)—Of course, I have, confound you!

WALKER—Well, don't get sore at me. I can't help it.

SLINGER—Now see here—Say, what the deuce *is* your name, anyhow?

WALKER—Broadway Walker. What's yours?

SLINGER—Josh Slinger. (*They rise and solemnly shake hands, then sit again*)— Mr. Walker,

I'm in something of a pickle. I've got to square myself with the missus. She must never know where I was last night.

WALKER—Don't worry; she won't.

SLINGER—How do *you* know she won't?

WALKER—Because you don't know where you were yourself. (*Grins.*)

SLINGER (*Groans dismally*)—That's right, I don't. (*Quickly*)—But *you* might tell her.

WALKER—Not a chance in the world, brother. The last I remember was getting into a taxi and hearing you tell the chauffeur to stop when we got to Philadelphia. (*Laughs.*)

SLINGER (*Sulkily*)—I don't see a thing to laugh at. Besides, you helped carry me into the house. You must have known more than I did.

WALKER (*Cheerfully*)—Oh, cheer up and shake the grouch!

SLINGER—Easy for you to say. You've no wife to face.

WALKER—If you'd have been wise, you'd have phoned her last night—

SLINGER (*Interrupting fiercely*)—You mutt! I did phone her. That's where I made my awful mistake. I phoned her an excuse, but I'll be hanged if I can remember what the excuse was now.

WALKER *bursts into a loud laugh, but is suddenly silenced by the voice of* MRS. SLINGER *off R., at which* SLINGER *exhibits signs of consternation.*

MRS. SLINGER (*Off R.*)—Never mind, James. I'll find him.

SLINGER (*Springs to feet and gazes about, frightened*)—My wife! (*To* WALKER)—Here's where we've got to display some inside quick thinking. You've got to hide your ugly face and form. (*Grabs* WALKER, *hustles him about the room, seeking a hiding place, finally rushes him back to couch and throws him onto it*)—Lie there. Lie quiet while I cover you with pillows. (*Begins to pile sofa pillows on top of* WALKER.)

WALKER (*Thrusting out his face*)—I'll lie here while you lie to your wife. Ha, ha! A joke.

SLINGER (*Soaking* WALKER *with pillow*)—Shut up before I kill you! (*Rushes about room, picking up the different articles of clothing, hurriedly attempting to get into them, but too excited to accomplish anything, drops things promiscuously all about; finally grabs up a hat, puts it on head, picks up a book and drops into a chair, apparently immersed in reading just as* MRS. SLINGER *appears in C. D.*).

MRS. S. (*Gazing scornfully at him an instant. Sarcastically*)—Good morning, dear!

SLINGER (*Looks over top of book and forces a smile*)—Ah, good morning, darling!

MRS. S. (*Advancing to him*)—And what is the idea of absorbing literature so early in the morning? (WALKER *uncovers face and grins maliciously.*)

SLINGER (*Uneasily*)—Oh, yes, to be sure. The —the book I'm reading, you mean. It's a new idea,

my dear. Freshen the brain for the day's work by giving it a gentle morning's tonic by the—the perusal of a good book. (*Smiles.*)

WALKER (*Aside*)—Gee, he's off to a good start all right.

MRS. S. (*Looks at pages of book*) That *is* a good idea—splendid! And your brain should be greatly freshened, especially when you read upside down.

SLINGER (*Starts guiltily, then quickly reverses book. Confusedly*)—I'm—I'm practicing the art of reading upside down. It's—it's a great sport. (*Smiles feebly.*)

MRS. S. (*Sarcastically*)—It certainly must be. (*Scans him from head to foot*)—It must be, indeed; particularly when you are attired in the manner in which you are at present.

WALKER *makes a comedy facial grimace and almost chokes with suppressed merriment.* SLINGER *throws the book at him and* WALKER *quickly conceals his head just as* MRS. S. *whirls suspiciously about, facing couch.*

SLINGER (*Soothingly*)—My dear, I—

MRS. S. (*Whirling and facing him*)—Don't you dare "my dear" me! I am in no mood to be addressed in sarcastic endearing terms. What I want is an accounting of your last night's whereabouts.

SLINGER (*Meekly*)—Yes, my dear. (*Confused*)—You—you see, my—

MRS. SLINGER (*Sternly*)—Yes, proceed; I am

waiting. (*Glares indignantly at him, one foot tapping floor in impatient manner.*)

SLINGER (*Nervously clears throat and glances uneasily about*)—Yes, yes, of course, my dear. Nothing I should like better. But won't you be seated. I can feel that it's going to take some time to square—to recount my last night's adventures. (*She turns to couch and is about to sit on it, when he springs to his feet in alarm*)—No, no; not on that; not on that; take a chair, my dear.

MRS. S. (*Suspiciously looking first at couch then at him*)—Your nerves are decidedly unstrung this morning. I shall sit where I please. (*Flops down on couch.* WALKER *frees his face and makes painful grimace*)—Now then, Mister Slinger. I am waiting.

SLINGER (*Attempting an ease he does not feel*)—You see, my dear—(*stops speech suddenly*)—Say, didn't I tell you all about it last night when I phoned you?

MRS. S. (*Coldly*)—You can hardly expect me to believe the story you told me over the phone, do you?

SLINGER (*Confusedly*)—I—I—told you—you—nothing but the truth. I told you—(*hesitates*)—told you—

MRS. S. (*Interrupts*)—You told me that you were playing golf with the King of England and the Emperor of Germany. (WALKER *smothers an outbreak of laughter by stuffing part of a pillow*

in his mouth.)

SLINGER (*With a sickly smile*)—Did I—did I tell you that?

MRS. S. (*Coldly*)—You told me just that.

SLINGER—My dear, there must have been some mistake. (*Shakes a fist at* WALKER.)

MRS. S.—Undoubtedly.

SLINGER—Of course there was a mistake. I am not on speaking terms with either the King of England or Emperor of Germany, and certainly not on golf terms either.

MRS. S. (*Sarcastically*)—How strange!

SLINGER—Oh, you needn't look at me that way. Now if you want the wholesome truth and nothing but the truth, here it is: I went to the ball game yesterday afternoon.

MRS. S. (*Surprised*)—Ball game?

SLINGER—Yes, the ball game. The game went into extra innings. In fact, it was the longest game I ever attended. They played all night.

MRS. S. (*Suspiciously*)—And what was the score?

of daylight. (*He smiles in triumph.* WALKER *almost explodes with suppressed laughter.*)

MRS. S. (*Grimly*)—And you expect me to believe that, do you? (*Sarcastically quoting*)—"The game was called on account of daylight!" Come now; do you expect me to believe that?

SLINGER (*Suddenly*)—Well, that's my story, and I mean to stick to it.

WALKER (*Aside*)—Oh, he's a pippin!

MRS. S. (*Rises, goes to him and places both hands on his shoulders. Pleadingly*)—Josh, dear; why don't you be fair with me? Tell me the truth. Don't be afraid—be a man! (*Almost in tears.*)

SLINGER (*Encircles her waist with an arm*)—I will speak the truth, my darling. I have absolutely nothing to conceal—nothing of which to be afraid. (WALKER *raises head and stares at* SLINGER *in surprise and the latter shakes a warning fist at him over* MRS. S's *shoulder*)—If you must know, I—I went fishing.

WALKER (*Aside*)—Fishing! Oh, Lord! (*Drops back on couch.*)

MRS. S. (*Drawing away from him in surprise*)—You went fishing?

SLINGER (*Cheerfully*)—Yes, darling; fishing.

MRS. S. (*Brightly*)—And what did you catch?

SLINGER—I said I went fishing, not catching.

MRS. S. (*Doubtfully*)—Well, what were you fishing for?

SLINGER (*Glances helplessly about, then is seized with a sudden inspiration*)—Why, why, —I—Oh, yes; oysters. (*Grins at her.*)

MRS. S.—Oysters! And how do you fish for oysters? (WALKER *is highly interested.*)

SLINGER—With an oyster cracker, of course. (WALKER *is convulsed.*)

MRS. S. (*Looks indignantly at him and then*

makes as if to leave the room. Sobbingly)—Oh, it's no use! I am disgusted with you and wish to hear no more of your ill-timed fiction. (*At C. D. chokes sobbingly, wipes eyes with hankerchief.*)

SLINGER (*Pleadingly*)—Oh, say; don't go. (*She turns*)—I'll give it to you on the level this time. Honest!

MRS. S. (*Comes back, smiling through her tears*)—Oh, Josh, I do so want to believe in you and trust you. Where were you last night? (WALKER *is again highly interested.*)

SLINGER—I went fishing—

MRS. S. (*Drawing back*)—Oh, Josh! Fishing again! (*Turns as if to leave.*)

SLINGER—Wait a moment, darling; please don't condemn me unheard. I've tried to keep this from you, but it is impossible. I must speak! (*Hesitates, while she gazes fearfully and tearfully at him*)—I—I know how tender hearted you are, and I dreaded to think of telling you of my exploits in catching those dear little fish on a great cruel hook. Can't you understand, my darling? Picture those sweet, dear little fish; picture that great big cruel hook! (*Covers eyes with both hands in apparent horror*)—Oh, that I might forget the look of awful agony on their innocent faces! (*Uncovers face and winks slyly at* WALKER.)

MRS. S. (*Half sobbingly and throwing arms about him*)—Oh, you old darling! How kind and thoughtful you are, and how cruel and thoughtless

I have been. (SLINGER, *over her shoulder, again winks at* WALKER.)

WALKER (*Aside*)—Isn't he the great little liar?

SLINGER (*Pushes her from him, holds her at arm's length; with mock severity*)—And you! You doubted me! Oh, that a wife of mine could ever doubt a good, noble husband like me! Why, I am the best husband you ever had!

MRS. S. (*Sobbingly*)—Yes, yes, I know, dear. Forgive me—please forgive me! It's—it's all my fault. Your only thought was to spare my feelings. (*Falls on her knees, pleadingly*)—See, on my knees I ask your forgiveness!

SLINGER (*Dramatically*)—Rise, woman, rise! (*Winks at* WALKER)—You are forgiven. (*Holds out his arms to her.*)

MRS. S. (*Springs into his embrace with a glad cry*)—Oh, Josh; I'm so glad! (*They embrace.* WALKER *pounds a pillow with glee.*)

SLINGER (*Gently releasing himself*)—And now, dearie; what say you to breakfast? I'm hungry as a bear.

MRS. S. (*Brightly*)—Of course, dear. How stupid of me. I'll go at once and see to it with my own hands. (*Starts for door, C., then stops half way; suddenly*)—Oh, I have it. I'll fry some of those fish you caught last night. (*Smiles brightly at him.* WALKER *is convulsed.*)

SLINGER (*Dumfounded; staggers weakly back-*

ward, groping blindly for the support of a friendly chair; finally strikes a chair and totters feebly into it. Gaspingly)—You—you—you'll fry some fish! (*Stares in dismay at her.*)

MRS. S. (*Smiling sweetly*)—Of course. Oh, it won't be a bit of trouble. I'd just love it.

SLINGER (*Floundering helplessly*)—The—the fish I caught—they are not used to being fried. (WALKER *chokes.*)

MRS. S. (*Coaxingly*)—Oh, come now; don't feel that way. I can fry them so they'll fairly melt in your mouth. Now no more objections. I know what my little hubby likes. You shall have those fish fried in butter, and with my own hands.

JAMES *appears in C.D.*

JAMES (*Apologetically*)—Excuse me, ma'am; but shall I be a-servin' of the breakfast now?

MRS. S. (*To* JAMES)—Yes, James; but not until I have prepared those fish. Come. You must show me where they are. (*Smiles brightly at* SLINGER, *turns and exit, C. D., followed by the surprised* JAMES. SLINGER *gazes after her in comic dismay.*)

WALKER (*Throws off pillows and sits up on edge of couch*)—Whew! Oh, Josh we're going to have fried fish for breakfast! (*Gives way to uncontrolled laughter.*)

SLINGER (*Savagely*)—Say, you mutt! Cut that out! What's so funny?

WALKER (*Quoting* MRS. S.)—"I know what my

little hubby likes. You shall have those fish fried in butter, and with my own hands." Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughs loudly.*)

SLINGER (*Springs to his feet, crosses with a rush to* WALKER *and cuffs him savagely*) Shut up! You got me into this mess, now you've got to get me out of it. Think, man—I know it must hurt you to do it, but try anyhow—think of some way out of this. Think!

WALKER (*Rocking back and forth in his merriment*)—Oh, Josh, Ho, ho, ho! Little fish, served in butter. Melt in mouth.

SLINGER (*Suddenly*)—I've got it? Hooray! (*Dances wildly about*)—I've got it. Quick! You run down to the corner and buy a couple of dollars worth of fish. That's the merry idea! Great, eh? Hurry, now! (*Jerks* WALKER *to his feet and shoves him towards the door, C.*)

WALKER (*At door*)—Say, wait a minute. I'm not dressed for the street. I'll get pinched instead of fish.

SLINGER—Never mind your clothes; get fish—that's all.

WALKER—What kind of fish shall I get?

SLINGER (*Shoving him out*)—Any kind, you rummie. Just hurry—that's all; hurry! (*Shoves* WALKER *out of door and off L. Runs to cabaret table, pours drink and gulps it down, sighing with deep satisfaction*)—Whew! What a relief! (*Starts to pour another drink.*)

Enter MRS. S., *C. D. She wears an apron and her sleeves are rolled up to her elbows.*

MRS. S.—Where did you tell me those fish were, dear? I don't seem to find them.

SLINGER (*Whirls about to face her, upsets decanter and knocks glass to floor.*) Fish! Did you say fish?

MRS. S. (*Surprised*)—Yes—fish! Why are you so excited?

SLINGER (*Confusedly*)—I'm—I'm not excited. I was—was merely wondering what fish you were referring to. You know, there are so many fishes.

MRS. S. (*Suspiciously*)—I believe you are trying to evade the issue. I want those fish you caught last night.

SLINGER—Yes, yes; to be sure you do. To be sure. The fish I caught last night. (*Brightly, stalling for time*)—You know, my dear, when you came in and said fish, I thought you—I thought—

MRS. S.— Yes; what did you think?

SLINGER (*Hesitating; then suddenly*)—It was a tie. The game finally had to be called on account

SLINGER—I thought perhaps you were referring to our next door neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Fish. (*Laughs feebly.*)

MRS. S. (*Severely*)—You well know the fish I meant.

SLINGER—Honest, I don't. You see, one meets so many people—

MRS. S.—I'm talking about fish—not people.

SLINGER—Oh, now I get you. You mean fish.

(*Laughs*)—By Jove, I don't blame you for being provoked at me. Fish, fish, of course.

MRS. S.—Will you please tell me where you put them?

SLINGER—Of course I will, my dear. You see, last night, when I came home, this morning, I said to myself: "Now, Josh, it will never do to bring these fish into the house. My darling wife might come in sudden contact with them, and the shock might prove fatal."—

MRS. S. (*Interrupting, scornfully*)—Shock prove fatal to me?

SLINGER—No, no; to the fish, my dear. So I didn't bring them in. I left them with a friend of mine, and he promised to have them here early this morning. Now you have it.

MRS. S. (*Suspiciously*)—There's something decidedly off color about this entire affair.

SLINGER (*Grieved tone*)—There you go again—doubting your only true and lawful husband. (*Goes to C. D. and looks anxiously off L.*) Very well. I shall soon prove to you Mrs. Slinger, that your accusations are entirely without foundation. (*Triumphantly*)—Aha! Here he comes now.

Enter WALKER, *C. D. He carries a market basket, in which are several cans of lobsters and salmon; over the basket is a white cloth. He hands basket to* SLINGER.

WALKER—There you are, Josh. Got here soon's I could. (*Breathing hard.*)

SLINGER—Thanks, old chap. (*Aside to him*)—What kind you get?

WALKER (*Aside to him*)—Don't know. Told the man to chuck in the first fish he got his hands on.

SLINGER (*Handing basket to* MRS. S. *Proudly*)—There you are, my dear; there are the fish. And I do hope that this will teach you a lesson never to doubt my word again. (*Jabs a thumb into* WALKER'S *ribs. They shake hands in triumph.*)

MRS. S. (*Sets basket on cabaret table, lifts cloth and peers at contents; starts with surprise*)—What kind of fish did you say you caught, dear?

SLINGER (*Drops* WALKER'S *hand; nervously*)—Why—there were different kinds, my dear; There were—(*Looks at* WALKER *for assistance.*)

WALKER (*Pompously*)—Bass, perch, sunfish—

SLINGER (*Very pompously*)—To be sure. Bass, perch, sunfish.

MRS. S. (*Lifting out a can and reading label aloud*:)—"Best Brand Baltimore Lobsters." (*Takes out another can and reads label*)—"Superior Canned Salem Salmon."

She turns and faces them suddenly, holding a can on high in each hand. SLINGER *staggers backward and faints in* WALKER'S *arms.*

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